

HERE'S WHAT THE BRACERO USERS SAY



These Hands are Important to You! ...THEY BELONG TO A MEXICAN BRACERO!*

* (Pronounced Brach *see* eh)

Without these hands we Americans couldn't have the abundance of wholesome, reasonably priced food and other agricultural commodities which California growers produce to feed and clothe our nation's expanding population.

Why?

Because the Bracero... or Mexican National... ably and willingly fills a vital gap in our farm labor picture. He performs the hard, but nevertheless skilled, snoop labor work involved in so many of the crops we produce here in California. The kind of work which the majority of our American farm workers just aren't interested in doing.

FOR THIS WORK, THE BRACERO IS PAID THE SAME WAGES AS AMERICAN WORKERS RECEIVE... AND CALIFORNIA GROWERS PAY THE HIGHEST AGRICULTURAL WAGES IN THE NATION!

Without the Bracero you would miss much more than the fresh fruits and vegetables you like so much. You'd also go without the canned, frozen and otherwise processed commodities such as tomatoes and their many by-products... asparagus... cukes... peas... oranges... lemons and a number of other important food items... harvested, to a great extent by these hard working, skilled Braceros.

Were the Braceros not here to harvest the commodities which they process, thousands of canner workers would be out of work. Manufacturers of cans, jars, labels, preservatives and other products closely allied to the food processing industry would suffer great economic loss... as would the transportation companies and countless other industries whose profits and employees' jobs depend so much on the vital link the Bracero fills in the overall economic chain of events.

WHAT'S MORE... THE BRACERO PROGRAM IS THE IDEAL MUTUAL AID-FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. AND ~~THE~~ PAID FOR BY THE AMERICAN FARMER. It provides the United States with an ideal means of harvesting many of our vital food crops while providing Mexico with its second largest source of income. AT THE SAME TIME, IT PROVIDES A STRONG LINK OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY WITH OUR IMPORTANT... AND STRATEGICALLY LOCATED NEIGHBOR TO THE SOUTH!

Something to think about... wouldn't you agree?

HERE ARE SOME OTHER FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW...

- ✓ Braceros are not wetbacks
- ✓ Braceros are not cheap labor... they must be paid the same wages as are paid American workers.
- ✓ Braceros do not... and cannot... compete with nor deprive qualified American farm workers of jobs.
- ✓ The Bracero program is not a government support or subsidy.
- ✓ The Bracero program is an ideal foreign aid-mutual assistance program.

ONE IN A SERIES OF MESSAGES DEVOTED TO HELPING CREATE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES OF CALIFORNIA



COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA GROWERS
870 MARKET STREET • SAN FRANCISCO 2, CALIFORNIA • CARROOK 2-1671
810 SOUTH SPRING STREET • LOS ANGELES 14, CALIFORNIA • MADISON 2-6186

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July 11, 1961

BUT...

HERE'S WHAT THE BRACEROS SAY

"We are working for the Vielma Camp in Manteca. We go out in Vielma's buses to work on various farms. When we get work, we have been picking strawberries. But most of the time, we do not get work. In the last two weeks, we got work only three days. The first day, there was no work. The second day, no work. The third day, no work. The fourth day, we worked about two hours. The fifth day, they told us to rest! The sixth day, we worked. The seventh day, no work. The eighth and ninth days, no work. The tenth day, we got about half a day's work. The eleventh day, we worked all day. The twelfth day, we "rested" again. The thirteenth day, no work. The fourteenth day, no work. In the whole two weeks, I picked 27 crates of strawberries. They pay 80¢ a crate. Before deductions, I made \$21.60. After deductions, I made \$3.95"

Juan G _____, August 15, 1961



"I was luckier than the other braceros. One day, I was given seven hours of work at \$1.00 an hour. So I made more than most of them. The last two weeks, I made \$24.60 before deductions, and \$6.95 libre. One of the other braceros asked the boss this morning whether we would be working by the hour or by the crate. He was ordered to get off the bus, and was taken to the Association in Stockton. We are told that he is being shipped back to Mexico. Many of the braceros are very unhappy. Thirty of them refused to go to work unless they get \$1.00 an hour. They say they don't care whether they get sent back to Mexico or not." Basilio B _____, Aug. 15, 1961

"One day I picked two crates of berries in about two hours. Another day the berries were very scarce: I got seven crates all day. Another day, I got five crates in about half a day. The fourth day, I got ten crates. That was all for two weeks: twenty-four crates, at 80¢ a crate. They charged me \$15.75 for board, and \$1.90 for insurance. My check was for \$1.55. That is not right. We sacrifice much to come here. Our families are in Mexico, waiting for us to send them money to live on. I could make more money than this by staying home. I don't care if I ever see the United States again."

Refugio B _____, Aug. 15, 1961

AND

Y HERE'S WHAT THE DOMESTICS SAY

"In the orchard where we were picking peaches, the foreman was walking up and down the rows, bawling us out. He was looking at every little old peach we picked, and cussing us out, and saying 'I got time cards here on every one of you. You want, and I'll punch you out right now. You don't like it here? Well, you just go right ahead and leave. We can get all the bullfighters we want.'

Bullfighters--that's what he called the Nationals. My wife and me, we stuck it out all day, because we just didn't want to give that b_____ his way, but the riding and the cussing was so bad that the next day we figured we wouldn't be able to keep from poking that guy in the nose, so we came on up farther north."

R_____, B_____, August 1, 1961



"For two months, we have been trying to support our families with work around the Patterson area. We are willing to do any kind of field work: thin sugar beets, hoe tomatoes, anything. But the growers and contractors keep laying us off because there are so many Nationals, and they say they have to give the Nationals the work first. Finally, about the fifth time we were fired, we picketed the Farm Placement Office in Patterson, because we know our rights. So the Farm Placement Office sent us out on another job about ten days ago, and yesterday we were fired again. The foreman told us they didn't have equipment enough for us and the Nationals. I don't know what we can do now."

S_____, J_____, August 15, 1961

"The growers don't need Nationals in the peaches any more than they need another hole in the head. This whole Stanislaus area is crawling with more domestics than they've ever seen before. But I guess getting Nationals has become a matter of pride with them. So after the little rain we had a few days ago, they went to Bainbridge, the head of the Farm Placement operation around here, and gave a cock-and-bull story about peaches rotting. So damned if they weren't certified to use 70 Nationals in freestone peaches! Of course, the funny thing is, they'd been using Nationals the past two weeks illegally. So the real difference was that it was made legal. Now I understand Bainbridge's certifications were thrown out in Sacramento headquarters. So we'll see if they continue using them illegally or not."

L_____, H_____, August 15, 1961

AND...

HERE IS WHAT AWOC SAYS

THE BRACERO PROGRAM IS NOTHING MORE OR LESS
THAN LICENSED AND LEGALIZED SLAVERY!!

THIS LICENSED AND LEGALIZED SLAVERY MUST STOP!!

Bracero-runners will naturally fight to hang onto their system just as the growers of the South fought to hang onto their version of slavery exactly one hundred years ago. The planters of the Imperial Valley took up arms last winter. The Council of California Growers, for the moment at least, prefers the big lie technique. We agree their "facts" are "something to think about", all right--but not in the way they suggest.

1. Braceros are cheap labor. Do you think bracero-runners could get Americans to work for \$1.55 for two weeks--and pay \$17.65 in compulsory deductions to the employer while doing so?
2. Braceros can and do deprive qualified American farmworkers of jobs. The legal fiction that they are not supposed to do so is taken even less seriously than bootleggers regarded the legal fiction of Prohibition.
3. The bracero program is a government subsidy, and it is a subsidy particularly for large, labor-using growers rather than family farmers. True, bracero-runners have to pay the government for their slaves, cash on delivery--but what other industry is able to dial the U.S. Department of Labor for slaves, on a COD or any other basis?
4. The bracero program is not an "ideal foreign-aid mutual-assistance program" any more than the forced labor programs of South Africa, and Angola are ideal from the point of view of African colonial peoples.

HELP AWOC ABOLISH THIS NATIONAL DISGRACE

Write to us for further information. Send contributions to help us
continue our work.

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
805 East Weber Avenue
Stockton 3, California

Norman Smith, State Director; Henry Anderson, Northern California Area Council Chairman; Tony Rubalcaba, Fresno Area Council Chairman; Dorothy Hager, Stanislaus Council Chairman; Frank Palk, Sacramento Council Chrmn.